

HOW THE OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY TOOK MY ADENA TABLET FROM ME ...

by
Edward M. Low

I Found an ADENA INDIAN TABLET in 1943, in Parkersburg, WV as a boy of 12 years of age. I knew it was indian and maybe one or two hundred years old.

I kept the tablet in my clothes drawer for twenty-eight years while I moved all over the eastern part of the United States working for large companies and the U. S. Gov. in the computer field.

Finally in 1971, an article appeared in a Columbus newspaper, about a Mr. Raymond Baby, an archaeologist at the Ohio Historical Society Museum about Indian artifacts. I talked to Mr. Baby on the phone and went to see him the next day.

THE ONLY REASON I WENT TO SEE MR. BABY, WAS TO FIND OUT WHAT KIND OF INDIAN ARTIFACT DID I HAVE. I found out it was from the Adena era. He didn't tell me anymore than that. He was just interested in the tablet. He asked, if he could have it "ON-LOAN" for a week to ten days to do research on the tablet?

He then told me that he was having an Ohio Archaeological Society Meeting within the next few days and could he have it a little longer and make a REPLICA of it so he wouldn't have to pass around the original tablet and take a chance getting the original broken. I told him he could only make one replica. He asked, if I would like to have a copy of the original and I told him I would appreciate a copy of the original. He asked, that I would not sell the replica to a collector, because collectors would not let museums have copies to be studied or researched. I agreed to this and asked him to do the same with the copy that they would have for OHS. HE ASSURED ME THAT THEY WOULD NOT SELL THE COPY.

The OHS meeting would be on the 15 & 16 May 1971. I realized he probably would need more time than two weeks and sug-

gested he take a little longer and call me when he had finished his study and research on the tablet. I agreed to let Mr. Baby have the tablet "on-loan" for a short time, just like he asked - ---- NO FORMS OR PAPER WORK WAS TALKED ABOUT MENTIONED OR PRESENTED TO ME TO SIGN AT THIS MEETING. THIS WAS THE ONE AND ONLY TIME I EVER SAW MR. RAYMOND BABY IN PERSON.

I have a letter I received from Mr. Sigfus Olafson of Madison, WV., dated May 25, 1971. This was in reference to him being in attendance at the OHS meeting that was held on May 15-16, 1971 with Mr. Baby in attendance.

Mr. Olafson's letter stated that I had said to Mr. Baby (the only time I met him) that "I wanted to give the indian tablet to the State of West Virginia or the State of Ohio, but couldn't make up my mind." I had stated to Mr. Baby, that I wanted the State of West Virginia to have the tablet to display, and under controlled conditions. THE TABLET WAS FOUND IN WEST VIRGINIA. THE STATE OF OHIO WAS NEVER MENTIONED. NEVER ----

One month went by and I thought Mr. Baby should be calling me to come and pick up the tablets. Another month passed and still no call. Three months had passed and it was almost the first of September 1971, then I finally received a call from Mr. Baby.

Mr. Baby apologized for not calling me earlier but had anticipated my answer to his question and did not want to hear my answer. He asked, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THE TABLET? Before I could answer him, he asked me another question. Would you sell the tablet? I told him, no. He told me that they had wealthy benefactors in the society and would like to buy the Adena tablet from me. I again told him that I would not sell it. I asked him

if he would put it on display for people to see and only until I had a place in West Virginia to put it on display and that he could keep it indefinite until that time came. He agreed to that, saying he would name it the Low Adena Tablet. For that he would make me a member of the OHS. That thought that was a nice gesture. I did not know anything about the Ohio Historical Society. I was only at the OHS just to see Mr. Baby. The membership didn't mean anything to me at that time. I really didn't give it much thought.

Weeks went by and I received the membership papers in the mail. I didn't think much about them until I read that I had give the tablet to them for the membership that I really didn't know anything about and wasn't important to me. I JUST LAUGHED. I HAD NOT SEEN ANY PAPER WORK OR SIGNED ANY PAPERS TRADING MY TABLET FOR A MEMBERSHIP. I let it go for the time being until I had a place in West Virginia to display the tablet in the Blennerhassett Museum in Parkersburg from where the tablet was found.

I went to the OHS on December 6, 2007 to pick up my tablet and was told that they owned it and that I had traded it for the membership.

I was then told to take them to court and that they had a large staff of attorneys to counteract the court action.

This is November 14, 2008 and court action is being filed in the near future.

It took me four more years after September 1971 to find out the tablet is approximately two to three thousand years old. They didn't let me know that.

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